

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

What is claimed is:

1. (Amended) A composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable gel containing an antimicrobial agent used for catheter protection.

2. (Amended) A composition as claimed in claim 1 wherein said gel is thixotropic.

3. (Amended) A composition as in claim 1 ~~and claim 2~~ wherein said gel is a hydrogel.

4. (Amended) A composition as in ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 3~~ wherein said gel is a microgel.

5. (Amended) A composition as in claim 1 ~~to 4~~ wherein the antimicrobial agent is taurolidine, taurultam or a mixture thereof.

6. (Amended) A composition as claimed in ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~ wherein said gel also contains an medically acceptable anticoagulant agent.

7. (Amended) A composition as claimed in any of the ~~claims~~ of claim 1 ~~to 6~~ wherein said composition contains salicylic acid or one of its salts.

8. (Amended) A composition as claimed in claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~ wherein said gel can be injected into an indwelling catheter and said gel can be withdrawn from a catheter using conventional medical syringes.

9. (Amended) A locking agent for an indwelling catheter that is composed of a thixotropic gel or a colloidal fluid that is retained in the catheter with minimal loss during instillation and/or the duration between uses of the catheter and can be instilled and withdrawn using a syringe.

10. (Original) A catheter lock solution according to claim 9 in which the agent is albumin.